

## **ST. LOUIS DISTRICT BOATING AND WATER SAFETY STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN PLAN**

**I. PURPOSE.** This strategic campaign plan analyzes boating and water safety fatality statistics nationwide and within the St. Louis District, and establishes recommended methods for educating the public about boating and water safety. The goal of this safety campaign is to reduce the number of water-related deaths and mishaps, and minimize potential liability claims against the government. The CESO/CECW memorandum, dated 15 Sep 2006, subject: Visitor Recreation Safety, provided a new USACE objective to reduce the recreation-related public fatality rate by 40% from the baseline rate, by the end of fiscal year 2008. Based on this guidance, St. Louis District's objective is to have no more than three water-related fatalities in fiscal year 2007 and two in fiscal year 2008. This document was developed to inform those internally about what we do to accomplish our campaign goals and objectives within the District.

**II. INTRODUCTION.** The St. Louis District is federal steward to over 300,000 acres of public lands and waters. This includes 5 multipurpose reservoirs, 5 navigational projects, 80 miles on the Illinois River, 36 miles on the Kaskaskia River, and 300 miles on the Mississippi River. Carlyle, Rend, and Shelbyville lakes are in Illinois. Mark Twain and Wappapello lakes are in Missouri. Our projects attract more than 16 million visits per year. According to visitation reports, 60% of these people engage in aquatic recreational pursuits such as swimming, boating, or fishing. Unfortunately, accidents happen and too often, some of them result in the death of a visitor. Drowning is our nation's sixth leading cause of unintentional injury death for all ages, and the second leading cause for those ages 1-14, according to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) available at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>. A thorough water safety campaign plan is a vital management tool in helping us accomplish our goal of potentially saving more lives.

**III. PUBLIC FATALITY DATA AND TRENDS ANALYSIS.** Boating and water-related fatality statistics at the national and district level have been analyzed in this section to identify current trends. The data allow us to identify target groups for boating and water safety education. At the National level, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) statistics on water-related fatalities have been kept since 1998. The nation-wide USACE data in this document primarily refers to an 8-year time period between FY98 and FY05, unless otherwise stated. The St. Louis District data referenced in this document also includes that same time-frame. Other data referenced includes the CDC WISQARS.

A. When Drownings Occur: Data have shown that historically most drownings occur during times of peak visitation and therefore, as visitation increases, the potential for fatalities increases. The majority of drownings at USACE projects occur on weekends during the months of April through Sept. Fifty-percent of all incidents are between June and July, when the projects are the busiest and water temperatures are warmest.

B. Activity: Swimming and boating constitutes the two largest categories of recreational activities that lead to drowning. Nationally for USACE, between FY98 and FY05,

47% of the deaths were swimming-related and 43% were boating-related.

1. **Boating:** Collisions are the main reason for boating accidents, according to the U.S. Coast Guard statistics. However, falling overboard or the vessel capsizing is their number one cause of boating-related fatalities. They also reported that 70% of all reported fatalities occurred on boats where the operator had not received boating safety instruction. Nationally, the USACE rate for drowning from falling incidents is 19%, capsizing is 8%, and collisions are 7%. The St. Louis District rate for falling incidents is 38%, which is our main cause of all water-related fatalities, capsizing is 9%, and collisions are 16%. Capsizing is primarily caused by weather or from overloading the boat.

2. **Swimming:** Nationwide in the USACE, 21% of swimming-related drownings occur at designated swimming beaches. The other 79% occur while swimming at non-designated, but legal portions of the shoreline, such as along the shore of a campground. St. Louis District statistics show 55% of swimming-related fatalities are in non-designated swimming areas. National experts estimate that two-thirds of drowning victims are either poor or non-swimmers. People exceeding their swimming abilities is speculated to be the main reason for swimming-related fatalities.

3. **Diving:** Diving-related injuries paralyze thousands of people each year. However, USACE statistics for these non-fatal accidents are not kept and detailed information from any reliable source was not found.

C. **Gender:** The majority of water-related fatality victims are male. Males constitute 89% of USACE water-related fatalities. District-wide our figure is 91% male.

D. **Age:** Throughout the USACE, statistics show 41% of all drownings occur to individuals between the ages of 18-35. In St. Louis District, 18-35 year olds are 23% of drowning fatalities. Our District records show our highest percentage of 25% in the 51-60 year old category. Other St. Louis District statistics show 22% ages 41-50, 19% ages 31-40, 13% ages 21-30, 9% ages 10-20, 6% ages 61-70, and 6% ages 0-9. The CDC WISQARS reports drowning as the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths (24% of all) for those in the 1-14 year old age group.

E. **Life Jackets/Personal Flotation Devices (PFD):** U.S. Coast Guard data indicate that 87% of victims in 2005 were not wearing a life jacket. Nationally, USACE's data indicate over 96% of victims were not wearing a life jacket. In our District, 94% were not wearing a life jacket. It is a well-known fact that those who die in boating accidents have life jackets with them, but do not bother wearing them. Some USACE projects have implemented PFD requirements at their projects under the District Engineer's Title 36 authority, section 327.12.a-Restrictions. These are typically projects with low visitation that would not have the political repercussions as we could expect from implementing such a requirement.

F. **Alcohol:** The U.S. Coast Guard reported in 2005 that one-fourth of all boating fatalities involved alcohol. According to USACE statistics drugs and/or alcohol were factors in 22% of the fatalities and 3% were unknown. In our District, 25% were confirmed to involve alcohol and 16% were undetermined. Involvement of alcohol or drugs is difficult to determine unless an autopsy is performed.

G. Minorities: According to the CDC WISQARS, drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional injury deaths in the United States for Hispanics of all ages, as compared with the sixth leading cause when all races are included. Fifty-percent of these Hispanic drowning deaths are in the 15-44 year old age group and 20% are ages 1-4. Race is not tracked in USACE fatality statistics; however, there is speculation that swimming-related fatalities are on the rise among those of Hispanic origin.

H. Recreation/Navigation Conflict: There is a growing concern for conflicts on our nation's waterways between recreational boaters and commercial navigation traffic. The U.S. Coast Guard responds to accidents on navigable rivers that often involve fatalities. Unfortunately, USACE Safety Offices are seldom made aware of river incidents unless they or someone at our Rivers Project Office hears about them through their contacts with local agencies.

**IV. EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES FOR TARGET GROUPS:** The focus of our educational messages can be divided into two main categories: those messages geared toward children in grades K-7 and those targeting teenagers and adults. Drowning statistics serve as the basis for determining the main focus of these messages.

A. Key safety messages for K-7<sup>th</sup> grade children:

1. Be careful to not wander very far away from the adults you're with and never go into the water unless they know it.
2. Use the buddy system; never swim alone. Half of all drowning victims are alone when they drown.
3. Don't depend on inflatable items to keep you afloat. There is no substitute for a life jacket, especially if you are a weak or non-swimmer.
4. Take swimming lessons and learn to swim well. Great swimming ability is a good defense against drowning. However, if you're on a boat it's always best to wear your life jacket.
5. Wearing your lifejacket can be fun and it can save your life. *(Take advantage of the amazing persuasive abilities of children and encourage them to have their parents wear lifejackets too.)*
6. Never dive into water head first unless you know how deep the water is and what is below the water's surface.
7. An estimated 60% of all drownings are witnessed; however, people are unable to identify the four classic symptoms of a drowning victim. These are head back (bobs up and down above/below the surface), mouth open, no verbalizing, and both arms outstretched moving simultaneously in an above-the-water, up and down stroke that appears like they are slapping the water.

8. You should never go near anybody struggling to stay afloat in the water because they could drown you! To help rescue someone you can extend a pole, stick, line, or clothing to reach them or throw something floatable within their grasp. The "Reach, Throw, Row, Go for Help" rescue method is encouraged to prohibit dual drownings. It only takes a child an average of 20 seconds and an adult an average of 60 seconds to drown. *Make sure when teaching the rescue method that children understand that only a trained lifeguard should go after someone struggling in the water; others should only go for help.*
- B. Key safety messages for teenagers and adults:
  1. An estimated 60% of all drownings are witnessed; however, people are unable to identify the four classic symptoms of a drowning victim. These are head back (bobs up and down above/below the surface), mouth open, no verbalizing, and both arms outstretched moving simultaneously in an above-the-water, up and down stroke that appears like they are slapping the water.
  2. Although it is legal for people 21 and older to consume alcohol while boating, it's against the law to operate a vessel while intoxicated. Many water-related accidents involve the use of drugs and alcohol, and many drowning victims are intoxicated at the time of death. Boat sober and use alcohol responsibly if you are recreating in, on, or near the water. *Fatal vision goggles are a great teaching tool for this.*
  3. Most drowning victims are within 10' of safety, having unintentionally entered the water. Witnesses can extend a pole, stick, line, or clothing to reach someone or throw something floatable within their grasp. The "Reach, Throw, Row, Go for Help" rescue method is encouraged to prohibit dual drownings. *Only a trained lifeguard should go after someone struggling in the water; others should only go for help.*
  4. While boating, be sure to wear your life jacket. It takes an average strong swimmer 10 minutes to put on a life jacket after entering the water, and that's after they have it in their hands. It only takes an adult an average of 60 seconds to drown. You would not put on a seatbelt just before a car wreck, and you don't get a chance to put on a life jacket just before a boat accident. A life jacket can't save your life unless you wear it, and holding onto a life jacket can only save you if you are conscious.
  5. Avoid standing up in a boat, and if you must do so, be sure to wear your life jacket. The majority (USCG = 57%) of boating-related fatalities are from falls overboard or capsizing. An estimated 90% of boating accident victims may have lived if they had been wearing a life jacket.
  6. Watch your children; it only takes a child an average of 20 seconds to drown.
  7. Take a NASBLA (National Association of Boating Law Administrators) approved boating safety course. These are offered by the USCG Auxiliary, U.S. Power

- Squadron, Am. Red Cross, State agencies (MO Water Patrol, IL Dept. Natural Resources), and on-line (<http://www.boatus.org/onlinecourse/> or <http://www.americasboatingcourse.com>) . Typically, you can receive a discount on your boat insurance policy with proof of completing one of these courses. The majority (70%, according to USCG, 2004 statistics) of boating-related fatalities involve operators who had not received any boating safety instruction.
- a. In IL, a person from the age of 12 to 18 must complete an IL Dept. of Natural Resources boater safety course before they can operate a water vessel without adult supervision.
  - b. In MO, every person born after Jan. 1, 1984 who operates a vessel on MO lakes must have in their possession a boating safety identification card issued by MO State Water Patrol (along with a valid photo I.D.) while they are on the water. Information on obtaining the boating safety I.D. card is available at <http://www.mswp.dps.mo.gov> or call 1-800-830-2268.
8. Don't cross your stupid line. The Stupid Line is that line of choice we all have when faced with risk. It separates **smart risk** from **stupid risk**. It's up to you to decide where to draw the line. Exceeding your abilities is a risk often associated with peer pressure and it can lead to deadly consequences. Two prime examples of this are swimming farther or drinking more than you should. (*This media campaign was started in Canada by an organization called SMARTRISK as a way to appeal to the senses of younger audiences.*)
  9. Never dive into water head first unless you know how deep the water is and what is below the water surface.
  10. Boat with consideration of others. You are responsible for any damage that your vessel or its wake causes. Be cautious and aware of your surroundings at all times. Typically, irresponsible actions of boat operators lead to accidents, so boat responsibly.
  11. Be aware that "boater's hypnosis" is a condition created when the combination of sun, wind, boat vibration, and noise over time can slow down a boat operator's reflexes. This combined with alcohol compounds the intoxicated affect and slows reaction time even more.
  12. Sudden immersion in water causes an involuntary gasp reflex. It only takes ½ cup of water in your lungs to drown. The gasp reflex is delayed when people are under the influence of alcohol or drugs causing them to inhale water and drown. Alcohol and drugs can also intensify caloric labyrinthitis, a condition which causes a person to become disoriented when suddenly entering the water to swim down when they think they are going up.
  13. Cold water immersion is the cause of many boating-related fatalities. The danger increases as water temperature decreases below normal body temperature (98.6

degrees F). Cold water immersion follows 4 stages, starting with cold shock, followed by swimming failure, then hypothermia, and finally post-rescue collapse. Most cold water drowning fatalities are attributed to the first two stages, and not hypothermia. All boaters should wear a life jacket and dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature. If self-rescue is not possible, actions to minimize heat loss should be initiated by remaining as still as possible in the Heat Escape Lessening Position (HELP), where arms are pressed against the chest and legs are pressed together, or huddling with other survivors. A report on cold water immersion can be found at <http://www.bordeninstitute.army.mil/medaspoofharshenvrnmnts/Ch17-ColdWaterImmersion.pdf>.

14. Carbon Monoxide (CO) can harm and even kill someone inside or outside of a boat. CO poisoning is preventable. Every boater should be aware of the risks associated with CO – what it is; where it may accumulate; and the symptoms of CO poisoning. Downloadable educational tools are available at [www.uscgboating.org/command/co.htm](http://www.uscgboating.org/command/co.htm).
15. Boaters should always leave a float plan with a relative, friend, or marina. It's important that a responsible person on shore knows of you plans. Leave your schedule, route and other vital information with someone who will take action should you fail to return or check in on time. A sample float plan can be found at: <http://www.uscg.mil/d9/d9boating/foatplan1.html>
16. Steer clear of commercial vessels that have to stay within the navigation channel on the river. An average tow boat pushing barges can take  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles to come to a stop. If you can't see the pilot, they can't see you, because a commercial pilot's blind spot can extend for several hundred feet to the front and sides of their vessel.

**V. CAMPAIGN ACTION DESCRIPTIONS.** A wide variety of programs and management tools are designed to increase public awareness and to create a safe water recreation environment. Actions are described and categorized in this section.

A. District Water Safety Team: In 2001, a water safety team was formed to combine our efforts in promoting this safety campaign. They meet semi-annually to develop their initiatives for the year. The team consists of representatives from each lake, Riverlands, Navigation, OD-T, SO, and PA, and advisory representatives from OD, OC, RM, and IM. By working together as a District, we can increase our campaign efficiency and effectiveness. For example, when we consolidate purchases of water safety promotional products for distribution to the public, it greatly reduces our costs.

B. The HQUSACE Water Safety Products Delivery Team (PDT) consists of a field office or district level representative from each USACE Division, and is led by Lynda Nutt from the National Operations Center (NOC) for Water Safety in Walla Walla District. This team develops safety products, which are available to field offices in an annual on-line catalog at <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil>. Products include award winners such as "Safe Passage"

video and on-line curriculum, the “Young and the Reckless” video, and the “Bobber the Water Safety Dog” campaign with on-line cartoons (<http://bobber.info>) and products that appeal to all ages. This PDT has also made arrangements with companies to broker their safety items so that projects can purchase safety items via credit card at reduced costs. For example, the fatal vision goggles that simulate intoxication were a brokered purchase and the price was greatly reduced by the company because we were ordering so many. This PDT has also coordinated a National Coloring Contest for school children and Photo Contests for USACE employees.

### C. Printed Materials:

1. Sea-Bags. These 14" X 17" litterbags have two sides of printed boating and water safety information. These bags are distributed to visitors and serve a dual purpose of keeping our projects clean and educating visitors about safety. In FY06, the NOC for Water Safety provided a few boxes of litterbags to every project office.

2. Project Brochures. Projects strive to include a water safety tip or message in each project brochure and park information guide.

3. NRRS Receipt Messages. Every National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS) receipt has space for including a message. It is recommended that safety messages be added. For example, at Wappapello Lake, receipts state, “Life Jackets and Seat Belts Save Lives Buckle-Up.”

4. HQUSACE Products. Annually, each project orders products from the USACE Water Safety PDT’s on-line catalog. These items include the adult and children’s brochures, fun books, stickers, decals, stamps, posters, and various media products. These products are used as educational incentives in a variety of ways to promote boating and water safety.

5. Posters. Water safety posters provided by HQ are placed on bulletin boards on project lands, especially those near water, i.e. boat ramps, beaches, marinas, etc.

6. Safety Promotional Products. Since the implementation of the National Policy that clarified the use of safety promotional products in 2002, we have worked together to pool any funds available to purchase these items as a District, because increasing quantities reduces costs.

### D. Media:

1. Phone Information Hotlines. Rangers at the lakes maintain 24-hour project information recordings for people to call for current fishing conditions, weather forecasts, upcoming special events, water levels, and other pertinent information. Each recording should include a seasonally related safety message.

2. Travelers Information AM Radio Station. These low wattage, short- range, AM radio stations provide programming similar to that used for years on the phone hotline

service, but it can be more beneficial as well. For example, instead of remembering to call prior to leaving home, visitors are reminded of the radio station by signs along the roadway and can learn what's going on at the project while en-route. Rend and Mark Twain lakes have purchased their own stations.

3. Radio Programs. Periodically throughout the year, the USACE is invited to appear on local radio stations. Although the main topic of conversation is not always water safety, rangers should take every opportunity available to educate the media and the public about the importance of boating and water safety.

4. Public Service Announcements (PSA's). When HQUSACE provides audio and video PSA tapes, these should be distributed by each project to local television and radio stations. In addition to those, some field offices have produced their own audiotapes in cooperation with local radio stations. Overall, use of PSAs by the media on a voluntary basis is low. Since PSA requirements were relaxed in the 1980s, it has been almost impossible to get the media to use PSAs without some expenditure. Purchasing airtime or space for water safety public service announcements (PSAs) through television, radio, and print media is often the only way to guarantee their use. Since our funding is limited, major holiday weekends should be targeted for these expenditures due to higher visitation rates. It is recommended that projects in close proximity of each other combine their PSA efforts on television initiatives. PSA's are also provided to St. Louis metro radio stations.

5. News Releases. Each field office distributes a large number of news releases to the media. Since the theme is not always boating or water safety, it can be included as a secondary topic when appropriate. The District's Public Affairs Office also sends out an annual water safety press release in conjunction with National Safe Boating Week and prior to the Memorial Day weekend.

6. Billboards/Inflatable Ball/Blimp. Water safety billboards along entrance roads to recreation areas were initially placed at Carlyle Lake and have spread to the other field offices. Mark Twain Lake has a water safety poster contest for high school students. The winning poster is made into a billboard and displayed around the lake. Carlyle Lake also purchased an inflatable ball and a small blimp with a water safety message that were both tethered at their beach areas during events.

7. Web sites. Each project as well as the District maintains a web site. Rend Lake's web site was the first in the district to include a "Kids Korner." "Kids Korner" featured a water safety-coloring contest, safety puzzles, and other "fun stuff" which focused on safety for kids. These project web sites offer the perfect place to display water safety messages, safety games, and informational links to other safety related web sites. The District's newly formatted recreation homepage has links to HQUSACE's Water Safety Program website, as well as Bobber: The Water Safety Dog website.

8. Telephone Hold Messages. Carlyle and Wappapello lakes have incorporated safety messages and Willie B. Safe safety songs for callers to listen to while they are on hold. These seasonal safety messages cover water and hunting safety.



9. Television. Every year, particularly around Memorial Day and Fourth of July weekends, the District's Public Affairs Office contacts St. Louis metro television stations proposing water safety segments. Due to distance, the two projects pitched are Rivers Project Office in West Alton, MO, and Carlyle Lake in Carlyle, IL. For the last two years the District has successfully garnered interviews highlighting water safety.

E Visitor Assistance:

1. Boat Patrol. During regularly scheduled periods of boat patrol, USACE rangers should perform boat safety checks and issue safety tips and materials to the boating public. DR 385-1-1, Water Vessel Standard Operations Procedures, dated 31 May 2001, was developed to ensure that USACE vessel operators take necessary precautions to prevent injury or property damage.

2. Boat Safety Checks. Park rangers perform checks for safe boating equipment, both at boat ramps before boats are launched and on the water. This is primarily done during National Safe Boating Week, which is typically held the week prior to Memorial Day.

3. Critical Incident Stress Management Program (CISM) is a peer-driven stress management program that combines pre-crisis preparation, stress education, and post-event response to help people recover more quickly from abnormally stressful job-related incidents and trauma, collectively known as "critical incidents." CISM can be very helpful to those dealing with public fatalities. Rend Lake Ranger Mark Roderick is our MVD Subject Matter Expert on CISM.

4. Tube Kiting Policy. Based on Consumer Product Safety Commission warnings and product recalls, the District implemented a policy to prohibit the use of kite tubes, which are defined as "towable inflatable devices designed to become airborne".

F. Recreation Facility Management:

1. Beach inspections. Beaches are established in accordance with the criteria in EM 1110-1-400, Recreation Facility and Customer Service Standards, dated 1 Nov 2004. Beaches are inspected annually, and as deemed necessary by each Project, to eliminate underwater obstructions and hazards. District guidance on these facilities is described in the "District Policy on Beaches," G-18 of the Operations Management Manual.

2. Signage. Beach rules are placed at all entrances to those facilities and published in the additional regulation section of each project's Park Information Guide. Safety suggestion signs should be separated from beach rules on signs to avoid customer confusion with what is enforceable by issuance of a citation. Signs for no lifeguards, no diving, watch your children, and "Drownings to Date" are displayed as necessary.

3. Rescue equipment. According to EM 1110-1-400, it is optional to have lifesaving posts at designated beach areas. This should include one ring buoy with rope (or the equivalent throw bag) and a 10-12 foot pole (shepherd's hook).

#### G. Professional Development:

1. Employee Safety Awareness Training. All new employees must be given basic water safety training. One of our great success stories was when an employee who did not know how to swim was able to identify a drowning victim and save the life of a child using a "reaching" technique he had learned. Also, CPR and first-aid courses are required training for rangers.

2. Motorboat Operators. It is the policy of the USACE that all employees who operate USACE vessels less than 26 feet in length, be trained, tested, and licensed in accordance with ER 385-1-91 and other applicable regulations. Each project has an instructor for this course.

3. National Water Safety Congress (NWSC)/ National Safe Boating Council (NSBC). Membership in these organizations is encouraged especially for our non-profit partners who may be eligible for grants. It is recommended that District employees attend the International Boating & Water Safety Summit annual meetings, which allows interchange of ideas with many experts in the field. Wappapello Lake rangers gave a presentation on their successful Ranger Willie B. Safe campaign at the Summit in 1999.

#### H. Interpretation/Outreach:

1. Projects that present beach and campground interpretive programs should strive to make water safety the main focus of at least one-third of all these presentations. Weekend presentations are recommended during peak visitation periods. Safety messages, if not the main topic, should be incorporated into all interpretive programs. Rivers Project includes information on navigation and river safety in all of their Lock & Dam tours.

2. Outreach interpretive presentations to schools, civic groups, and clubs at various off-project locations are strongly encouraged. The award winning "Safe Passage" video, developed by the National Operations Center (NOC) for Water Safety, has curriculum that is available on-line for kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers. This product is designed for teachers to use alone, and it reduces the need for a ranger presentation. A video targeting a teenage audience named "The Young and the Reckless" became available in 2005. Projects should make these videos available to all schools in their area and campaign to make sure teachers are aware of them.

3. Wappapello Lake now manages the remote-control boat robot named Corkey- "the Corps key to boating and water safety." Corkey was originally purchased in 1998, and it was shared by all the field offices for many years. It is a very successful interpretive tool that is loved by all ages. As its operation became less dependable with age, Corkey stopped traveling throughout the District and currently resides at Wappapello.

4. Park Ranger Willie B. Safe (WBS) is a campaign that began at Wappapello Lake in 1998, and it has expanded throughout the district and the nation. WBS was featured in some FY98-99 nationally-distributed products. Wappapello staff developed this campaign to

provide a humanistic approach to promoting water safety. Ranger WBS is not a mascot, but represents the spirit of safety that all rangers carry. WBS unites rangers under one name that children can relate to and easily remember. Any ranger in a uniform wearing a life jacket can portray Ranger WBS. Ranger Willie's thumbs-up "Be Safe" sign is his/her signature message. Products that have been developed include an activity book, songs, magnets, color-on/iron-on decals, photo opportunity boards, 3' X 4' seasonal safety display boards, buttons, and PSAs. In 2001, COL Morrow selected WBS as our District Icon and designated July as WBS month.

5. The USACE National Operations Center for Water Safety, led by Lynda Nutt of the Walla Walla District, shares two personal watercraft robots driven by a Sea Serpent named Seamoer Safety. The Water Safety PDT oversees the Seamoer Safety Campaign and Dana Matics, from Wilmington District is the current National Coordinator that handles Seamoer's schedule. Projects interested in using Seamoer are responsible for the shipping charges to their project, training operators utilizing the training video and manual, and damage costs created by operator error. Seamoer use can be requested on the Gateway website in the water safety category.

#### I. Special Events/Activities:

1. Each project sponsors a variety of weekend special events. Some of these events deal with water safety themes, i.e. water safety carnivals, fishing fairs, or family safety days. Projects take advantage of any gatherings of large audiences to promote boating and water safety. In addition to events that we directly sponsor, it is encouraged to become involved with events that other agencies organize to promote safety (e.g. fishing tournaments, mall displays, and parades). Carlyle Lake created a Bobber, the Safety Dog float for a local parade. Then the plywood painted Bobber figures were used at other locations to promote that campaign. Rivers Project has a Mid-America River Expo festival to promote water safety.

2. National Safe Boating Week in late May is a great time to kick off the recreation season promoting safety. The National Safe Boating Council provides radio and television PSAs and a variety of tools to assist in planning a great event. More information can be found at their website <http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com/> In conjunction with National Safe Boating Week and the approaching Memorial Day weekend, the District's Public Affairs Office sends out an annual press release. This release typically generates some articles and follow-up calls from the media.

3. The St. Louis Boat & Sport Show is the biggest show of its kind in the area. We coordinate payment and staffing of a booth space with Kansas City and Little Rock districts to provide project and safety information to a vast number of our customers.

4. Attractive displays can be an excellent educational tool when placed at local restaurants, businesses, or when staffed at travel shows, fairs, or town festival parades. In MO, we work with other districts to staff a USACE booth at the state fair. Projects typically combine efforts to staff booths at the sport/travel shows and county or state fairs.

5. Water Safety Coloring or Poster Contests are used as a means to go into schools and inform children about being safe around water. Mark Twain Lake has their

winning poster made into a billboard and displayed around the lake. Rend and Wappapello lakes also have these types of contests.

6. Life Jacket Loaner programs have been implemented at our lake projects. A variety of sizes of life jackets are placed at convenient places (i.e. visitor center, office, beaches) for people to borrow for the day and return after they're done. Typically an informative display accompanies the distribution point that describes the program and the importance of wearing a life jacket. Life jackets are sometimes donated by area businesses, safety councils, or funded by grants.

7. Wappapello and Rend lakes have visitor center (VC) displays that specifically address water safety. Rend Lake has a personal watercraft display that was donated by Sea Doo on display in their VC. Wappapello has an interactive kiosk shaped like the console of a boat with a monitor depicting the process of locking a boat through a Lock and Dam. This program featuring "Bobber" was provided by the Toby Isbell from Little Rock District.

8. Boating Safety Education courses are conducted at all projects on an annual basis. Many of our rangers are instructors for the state-authorized curriculum. Cooperating agencies that assist us in conducting these courses include the IL Departments of Natural Resources, MO Water Patrol, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and U.S. Power Squadron. The IL Boating Course is now available on-line at <http://www.dnr.il.state.us>. A small fee is charged to take the exam and upon passing the exam the completion certificate is mailed to the recipient.

9. Special Outreach Campaign – Since 2000, park rangers at Rend Lake have made optimum use of the robotic tools available to the USACE. Each year the Interpretive Services and Outreach Program (ISOP) team has dedicated the month of March as water safety month. Park rangers visit local schools and present a water safety skit, which features a water safety robot, to school age children in grades pre-K thru 4<sup>th</sup>. Program titles have included: Happy Birthday Corkey, Land Before Water Safety, Commander Seamoore of the Intergalactic Water Safety Team, Sergeant Seamoore and the Corps of Discovery, and Seamoore the Buccaneer. These 30-minute programs creatively teach the five rules of water safety – Swim with a buddy, never swim alone, look before you leap, learn to swim, and wear a life jacket that fits.

10. In 2006, the National Great Rivers Museum held its Mid-America River Expo. The event's primary focus is water safety. In order to generate additional public interest, District staff took signs and Seamoore down to the windows at KSDK-TV (NBC affiliate) during the afternoon show -- Show Me St. Louis. Signs were shown periodically during the 30-minute show and the host interviewed one of the rangers at the end. The museum reported more than double the attendance at the event compared to previous year.

**VI. PARTNERING/COORDINATION WITH AREA BUSINESSES.** This section presents partnering ideas, which involve coordinating the distribution of boating and water safety messages with area businesses in order to reach larger audiences. Projects are strongly

encouraged to continue and expand these initiatives because they often take little effort and have a tremendous impact.

A. “The Water Safety Story” video is a great tool to explain to potential partners the USACE’s water safety campaign. Also, a boating and water safety campaign partnering plan was developed by the HQUSACE Water Safety Product Delivery Team to assist rangers in business partnering initiatives. It is available on-line at their website:  
<http://watersafety.usace.army.mil>

B. Water safety advertising slicks from the HQ Water Safety Media Kit and Guide have been provided to a variety of businesses for use on bank envelopes, restaurant placemats, ice bags, milk cartons, and grocery bags. This Media Kit provides numerous other ideas for distributing water safety information.

C. Water safety slides have been provided to project area movie theaters to show with their other PSAs prior to showing movies. Rivers Project has a water safety slide in their National Great Rivers Museum theater that shows prior to all audio-visual presentations.

D. Large (25') safety banners have been placed over highways on major approaches to projects and on the dams on holiday weekends. In the past, Lake Shelbyville has coordinated the procurement of banners, which stated "Designated Drivers Save Lives on the Water, DON'T DRINK AND BOAT," with the IL Department of Natural Resources Conservation Police, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and State Farm Insurance Company.

E. Avenue Banners, approximately 60" x 30", are placed on light poles along busy roadways. These colorful banners are effective in attracting attention. The double-sided banners display both a welcome message as well as a safety-related message. The banners are easily changed to reflect seasonal messages. The most common locations are along the dam roadway, boat ramps, and day use/picnic areas. Wappapello Lake has each of their avenue banners paid for by local water safety council.

F. Seasonal Safety Display Boards have been placed in five Wal-Mart stores in southeastern Missouri towns of Poplar Bluff, Piedmont, Dexter, Sikeston, and Cape Girardeau and in Corning, Arkansas. These double-sided safety boards are 3' X 4' and suspended from the ceilings from the sporting goods sections of these stores.

G. Changeable Marquee Signs are owned by some of our projects. These are used to post information, as well as safety messages. For those who don't have their own marquees, it is a good idea to solicit the support of area businesses with marquees to post safety messages, during National Safe Boating Week and the 3 major recreational holidays. Wappapello Lake established a two-year agreement with the Black River Coliseum (Poplar Bluff, MO) to place a safety message (promoting usage of life jackets and seat belts) on an illuminated sign in the arena. This message is viewed by thousands of visitors who attend the arena for various events such as high school and college basketball games, circus, music concerts, etc.

H. Lake Shelbyville has borrowed grocery bags from local grocery stores and taken

them to area school teachers so kids could color a water safety picture and message on the bag. Then the bags were taken back to the stores so they could use them to bag groceries and spread water safety messages to their customers.

I. Carlyle Lake project and the Carlyle Bank have worked together to promote water safety through a wooden coin/prize campaign. These small wooden coins had the banks logo, a water safety graphic, and a number on them. Participants that completed a registration form were given a coin. Each week throughout the recreation season, a registration form was drawn and a prize donated by local business was awarded to the winning coin holder. Each week, local newspapers published the winner's photo and radio stations announced the winners. This summer long contest was fun and united local businesses in promoting water safety awareness.

J. Projects work with their marina concessionaires to share safety information on a variety of topics such as carbon monoxide poisoning, and provide safety promotional materials to post and distribute at those locations.

**VII. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION.** Increased cooperation between the USACE and other agencies involved in boat and water safety issues can compound our success in promoting safety awareness. What follows is a description of some of our current interagency initiatives and suggestions for sustaining these relationships.

A. Missouri Partners for Safety. The five USACE districts in MO, the MO State Water Patrol and the MO State Highway Patrol signed a memorandum of agreement in 1998 to form the Missouri Partners for Safety team. Dianne Stratton, from Wappapello Lake, leads this campaign to promote the use of life jackets and seatbelts. Initially this was primarily a statewide billboard campaign; however, initiatives have expanded over the years. Representatives from these organizations meet annually to develop their partnering plans.

B. Local Water Safety Councils. Projects have excellent working relationships with local rescue and law enforcement agencies that enable us to work efficiently in emergency situations. Some projects have formalized this relationship into a council or search and rescue organization that expands this effort to include preventive approaches to water safety, and this is encouraged. If these organizations incorporate as non-profits they become eligible for grants.

C. U.S. Coast Guard/ U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Auxiliary/ U.S. Power Squadron. Memorandums of Understanding/Agreement (MOUs, MOAs) at the National level have been signed with all of these agencies. These suggest ways for the USACE to work together with them to promote our mutual interests. Lake Shelbyville has a local MOA with the USCG Auxiliary that explains in more detail their partnering initiatives.

D. Cooperating Associations. We have agreements at all of our projects with these non-profit, 501.c3 organizations and there are many ways the public benefits from these partnerships. These associations work with the USACE to support all of our educational initiatives, including boating and water safety promotion.

E. Other Interagency Suggestions. Projects should maintain current listings of all applicable state, regional, and local agencies that are involved in promoting safety issues to include names of contact persons, addresses, and phone numbers. Sharing resources such as printed materials and joint participation in events or education programs can assure wider distribution of information. At a minimum, a meeting should be held at the beginning of each recreation season to discuss shared goals, jurisdictional issues, and other plans with these agencies.

Suggested agencies include state departments of natural resources, water patrol, sheriff and police departments, highway patrol, search and rescue groups (civil defense, dive clubs), fire departments, emergency management agencies, Coast Guard, C.G. Auxiliaries, local water safety councils, Power Squadrons, hospitals, other medical facilities, and ambulance services, county health departments, coroners, Federal Magistrate, U.S. Marshal, District Attorney's, public health departments, American Red Cross, resort owners, marinas, and tourism offices.

## **VIII. NATIONAL PROGRAM ASSISTANCE FROM CEMVD**

A. The HQUSACE Water Safety Products Delivery Team is led by Lynda Nutt from the National Operations Center (NOC) for Water Safety in Walla Walla District. This team develops safety products, which are available to field offices in an annual catalog on-line at <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil>.

Currently our MVD representative on this national committee is Pam Doty, from Lake Shelbyville in St. Louis District. Typically representatives serve 3-year rotational assignments and Pam's term began in FY 2006.

St. Louis District's, Rachel Garren, OD-T, has served on this team since its inception in 1995, first as the MVD representative and subsequently, since 2000, as their Policy Advisor. Ms. Garren was instrumental in developing a National policy, which clarifies the use of approved funds for purchasing safety promotional materials that increases our ability to reach the public with key safety messages and furthers the USACE water safety mission. This policy is described in CERM-F memorandum, dated 27 November 2002, subject: Public Safety Promotional Materials. This policy can be found on the Gateway website at <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/watersafety/pdfs/02nov27-promotion.pdf>

John Punkiewicz, Rock Island District, assists the HQUSACE Safety Office and the NOC for Water Safety in consolidating water-related fatality information and statistics for the USACE. These statistics show a steady decline in water-related fatalities at USACE projects since the USACE began its National campaign to promote boating and water safety.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

This St. Louis District strategic campaign plan analyzes water-related fatality statistics, identifies messages for target groups, and recommends methods for educating the public about boating and water safety. Our goal is to reduce the number of water-related deaths and mishaps, and minimize potential liability claims against the government. Our objective established by the HQUSACE Visitor Recreation Safety initiative is to reduce the recreation-related public fatality rate by 40% from the baseline rate, by the end of fiscal year 2008. Based on this guidance, St. Louis District's objective is to have no more than three water-related fatalities in fiscal year 2007 and two in fiscal year 2008. Projects are encouraged to use the methods in this plan and to continue to discover innovative ways to achieve our safety campaign goals and objectives.